



Superfund Fact Sheet

February 2002

This fact sheet provides information about the Portland Harbor Superfund site. This site was added to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Priorities List (NPL) on December 1, 2000. Portland Harbor is a Superfund site because the river sediments are contaminated with metals, pesticides, PCB's and petroleum products.

LAUNCHING THE INVESTIGATION FOR PORTLAND HARBOR

After months of negotiations, the Environmental Protection Agency finalized an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), with members of the Lower Willamette Group in September 2002. The Lower Willamette Group is a coalition of Portland Harbor businesses and public agencies who voluntarily stepped forward to participate in the investigation and cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site.

The AOC is a legal agreement establishing the requirements for the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study for Portland Harbor. The AOC identifies contaminants of concern and establishes a schedule for the investigation, how it will be conducted, and who will perform the work. The AOC also describes how EPA and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will share responsibility for investigation and cleanup. According to EPA Project Manager Wallace Reid, "This agreement is good for EPA, good for the businesses and good progress towards getting a plan in place for cleaning up Portland Harbor."

The Statement of Work is an attachment to the AOC describing tasks to be performed between now and the end of April 2002. These tasks will help EPA and DEQ develop a complete work plan for the sediment investigation by the spring of 2002, and begin sampling in the river the summer or fall of 2002. Some studies about fish and physical systems of the river are already underway. The work plan will identify what types of samples will be taken and where the samples will be taken.

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WHAT COMES NEXT

The Lower Willamette Group will produce and deliver several significant documents to EPA and the Portland Harbor Project Team for their review and approval this winter and spring, during the development of the work plan. These and other documents will be available to the public:

Site Visit Report –provides a record of initial observations of Portland Harbor by technical and project management staff and contractors. This report was submitted to EPA in late December and is available upon request. A video report will also be available in the near future.

Draft Risk Assessment Scoping Memo - provides an initial look at the different ways humans and wildlife could be exposed to contamination. Exposure could be due to eating, breathing or coming in skin contact with hazardous substances. A risk assessment evaluates levels of contamination and determines potential risks to people and wildlife. Target release date: early spring 2002

WHAT ARE THESE DOCUMENTS? HOW SHOULD I VIEW THEM?

In our early conversations with community groups, many people expressed a desire to see preliminary information so they could participate in the Superfund decision making process as early as possible. As a result, during the next six months, EPA and DEQ will announce the availability of a variety of early, EPA approved documents, reports and data related to Portland Harbor.

We are taking this open approach because EPA and DEQ feel it is important for the community to have ready access to information, and be able to provide input. These documents provide basic information the project team will use in making decisions. Because these reports and data may be technical in nature, a Technical Assistance Grant has been awarded to Willamette Riverkeeper to assist the community in interpreting and understanding the information.

We believe that early review opportunities provide the most effective way of making the concerns and issues of the community part of the scientific and technical investigation. Traditional public review and comment opportunities will still be available at key times later in the process. We look forward to hearing from you as the process unfolds.

Preliminary Remedial Action Objectives – identifies how success will be measured in terms of what uses might be restored or improved by the cleanup. Possible objectives might be to ensure continued fishing and recreational use or restore wildlife or fish habitat. These objectives will be included in the draft work plan. Target release date: late spring 2002

Facility Siting Evaluation –identifies potential sites for disposal of contaminated sediments, identifies sources of sediment capping materials, and outlines the process for evaluating the available choices. Target release date: late spring 2002

Early Action Criteria – It may be possible to identify specific opportunities for early cleanup and/or restoration activities before the RI/FS and cleanup plans are completed. The Lower Willamette Group will evaluate criteria for prioritizing such activities. These early actions are in addition to any emergency cleanup actions that may be required, which would be identified by EPA and DEQ. Target release date: mid-spring 2002.

You can see the full text of the AOC at the EPA website: www.epa.gov/r10earth/ Click the index button and select P, and Portland Harbor. For more information on the Portland Harbor Superfund Site, contact Judy Smith, EPA at 206-553-6246 or Kim Cox, DEQ at 503-229-6590.

WHAT WE HEARD AT THE COMMUNITY FORUM

Willamette Riverkeeper hosted a well-attended public meeting at the St. Johns Community Center on January 31, 2002.

The purpose was to provide detailed information on the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. The forum highlighted why the harbor is a Superfund site, what is currently going on, what will happen in the next several years, and most importantly - how you can get information and get involved.

In addition to staff from Willamette Riverkeeper, Chip Humphrey and Judy Smith from the EPA, Kim Cox from DEQ, and Ken Kaufmann from Oregon Human Services Division made short presentations and were available to answer questions.

Some of the topics raised by meeting attendees during the course of the evening were:

What are costs associated with collecting sediment, fish and organism samples and what sampling has been done so far?

How do potential upstream sources of contamination affect the Portland Harbor Superfund site?

Crayfish were identified as an edible organism of potential human health concern.

Someone asked for a definition of benthic organisms.

Will the cleanup address potential contaminants from abandoned vehicles in the river around the boat ramps?

Will EPA and DEQ do what is needed to make sure the decision-making process for cleanup is transparent to the public?

What happens to potentially responsible parties who are not actively helping out?

These concerns and questions will be addressed during the course of the investigation. We look forward to hearing more about the issues that are important to you and other community members. Information will be taken into consideration by the project team as they investigate contamination in Portland Harbor and formulates alternatives for cleanup.

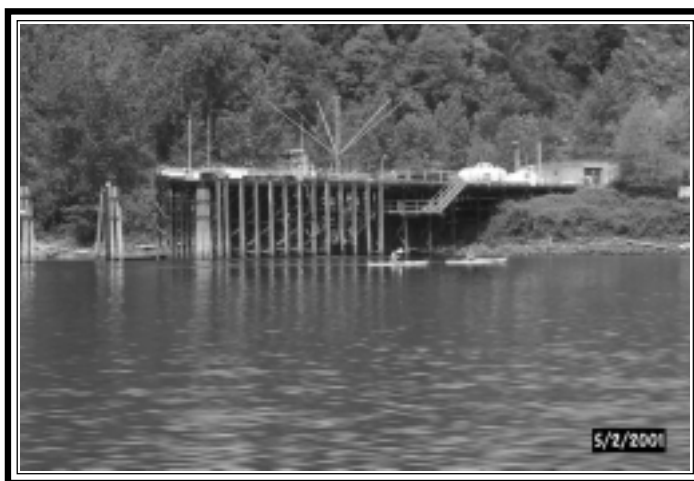
Willamette Riverkeeper has prepared a Citizen's Guide to the Portland Harbor Cleanup, which is available free of charge, as well as other materials about the Willamette River. For more information call 503-223-6418.

ATSDR RELEASES PUBLIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT

At the end of January, the Federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) released their Public Health Assessment for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. The ATSDR is required to assess the potential health risks to the public from Superfund sites.

During the past year, representatives from this federal agency have been researching existing data, and talking with people who use the river or live nearby. The Assessment looks at possible ways the contaminants could reach humans through the air, water, soil or food chain.

To request a copy or get additional information contact ATSDR Health Communications Specialist, Dan Holcomb, at 404-498-1745 or dwh6@cdc.gov.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN RELEASED

A Community Involvement Plan for Portland Harbor has just been completed. The five objectives of the plan are: (1) Provide opportunities for public participation that will effectively incorporate community concerns into cleanup decisions; (2) Provide consistent, regular and timely information about the investigation and cleanup plans and activities for Portland Harbor sediments and upland sites; (3) Identify affected communities and key stakeholders and establish regular and open dialogue to respond to questions, concerns and conflicts as they arise; (4) Meet statutory requirements regarding public notice and opportunities for public involvement; (5) Evaluate the effectiveness of this community involvement plan and make changes as needed.

The Community Involvement Plan outlines general outreach tools that will help EPA and DEQ achieve these objectives. We welcome your feedback about this plan. The Community Involvement Plan includes a six month action schedule of specific activities are going to take place (see box).

January 2002

EPA and DEQ participate in Community Forum sponsored by Willamette Riverkeeper

February 2002

Fact Sheet: documents and information available during the next six months.

Community Involvement Plan released

Fact sheet: Draft Risk Assessment Scoping Memo and Conceptual Site Model

Share information about Community Advisory Groups and provide information toolkit to interested citizens

March 2002

Fact Sheet: Introduce project team members and trustees, EPA Customer Service survey

Small group discussions to talk about issues and concerns

Major mailing list update

April/May 2002

Fact Sheet: Round 1 Work Plan

Public meetings and availability sessions: how to view and interpret work plan

July 2002

Update Community Involvement Plan

Other Tasks:

Update EPA website

Update DEQ website

Share key decisions on upland site cleanups with fact sheets or neighborhood meetings

Work cooperatively with city to develop Portland Harbor Superfund curriculum for local schools.

Work with Environmental Justice Action Group and Immigrant and Refugee Organization to make sure information about fish consumption is shared with affected communities

You can view the Community Involvement Plan on the web at the EPA or DEQ websites, or you can request a copy in the mail by contacting Judy Smith at EPA or Kim Cox at DEQ by phone or e-mail. Their contact information is provided on the last page.

JOIN A PORTLAND HARBOR DISCUSSION GROUP

Would you like to join a small focus group to share your issues and concerns about the Portland Harbor Superfund Site?

In early April, EPA is hosting several small group meetings to promote discussion among community members who have an interest in Portland Harbor. The purpose of these groups is to help provide information about community values and needs to the project managers early in the process so those needs can be incorporated into the investigation and cleanup at the very beginning.

If you are interested, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, Judy Smith at 206-553-6246 or Smith.Judy@epa.gov. Judy can also be reached during business hours through the toll free number of 1-800-424-4372 Ext. 6246.

You could also indicate your interest using the form below. Fill it out and mail it in, to EPA Region 10 (ECO-081), 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle WA 98101.

Are you interested in receiving future information regarding EPA's assessment of the Portland Harbor? *(check all that apply):*

- ☐ I want to be on the mailing list for future fact sheets.
- ☐ I would like to be notified by e-mail when information is available on the web.
- ☐ I would be interested in joining a Portland Harbor focus group.

(If the mailing label on the reverse side contains your correct personal information, you don't need to fill in the blanks.)

Name: _____

Company or Group (optional): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Portland Harbor Project contacts:

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Visit the EPA or DEQ Portland Harbor websites:

EPA Region 10 website:

<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>
Click on "Index",
then "P,"
then "Portland Harbor."

DEQ website:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us>
Click on "Programs,"
then "Environmental Cleanup and Spills,"
and then "Portland Harbor."

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the EPA representatives listed above.